

Governor Quinn Honors Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by Calling for Increased Diversity in Hiring

Written by Leslie Wertheimer
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Holds First Annual Inclusion Summit to Emphasize Importance of a Diverse, Equal Opportunity Workplace

CHICAGO – January 15, 2013. Governor Pat Quinn today was joined by business leaders from across Illinois for a Diversity and Inclusion Summit. Held on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, the summit underscored the importance of equal economic opportunity and diversity in hiring. Since taking office in 2009, Governor Quinn has made promoting diversity in hiring and equal economic opportunity in Illinois a priority. The governor has assembled a diverse cabinet and senior staff, to ensure that Illinois' government reflects the rich diversity of its residents.

“Regardless of race, gender or orientation, everyone should have an opportunity to get a job in Illinois,” Governor Quinn said. “Our state is proud to have a highly-skilled workforce comprised of citizens from all walks of life who bring a wide range of strengths to the table. Employers who have a diverse workforce are more competitive and more successful.”

Held at the University of Chicago's renowned Booth School of Business, the summit featured a series of panelist presentations from minority business leaders representing a variety of sectors, including Pat Harris, global chief diversity officer at McDonalds Corp, and Nim Chinniah, executive vice president for administration and chief financial officer at the University of Chicago. A question and answer session and networking reception took place following the presentations, allowing attendees to engage with panelists and make key business connections.

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A workforce encompassing a variety of backgrounds benefits businesses by incorporating unique skill sets. It is from these different skills, experiences and ways of thinking that innovation is fostered and problem solving can increase.

Businesses aim to practice inclusion and diversity in hiring because employees of various backgrounds can connect with a wider range of clientele, which expands a business' base and helps tap into new markets. Integrating cultures can also strengthen a company's culture by allowing employees to learn from each other and adapt positive traits a co-worker's culture might embody.

Governor Quinn has worked closely with the Illinois Department of Transportation to implement initiatives designed to increase diversity and employment opportunities in state projects for Illinois firms owned by women, minorities or socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. In 2011, the governor signed legislation ensuring a fair state contract bidding process for minority- and women-owned businesses in Illinois.

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